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GSA Announces Forward Momentum in
African Burial Ground Project

NEW YORK – The U.S. General Services Administration today announced significant momentum in key phases of the African Burial Ground project during the first of several public forums it will host over the next few months.

In a highly anticipated announcement, Dr. Howard Dodson of the Schomburg Center for Research In Black Culture presented plans for the week-long re-interment ceremony -- expected in the fall of 2003. The conceptual designs for the Exterior Memorial were also presented, along with the design principles that guided the artists in the development of their submissions.

"We are applying renewed leadership and priority to the African Burial Ground project and the results we are achieving will lead us to the successful completion of this highly important project. We are definitely focused on completing the African Burial Ground Project prudently, expeditiously and with dignity," said GSA Administrator Stephen A. Perry.

GSA continues to make great strides in completing this project as evidenced by its progress in 2002. Current projections are that the African Burial Ground Project will be completed in the near future. GSA Administrator Stephen A. Perry has made the successful completion of the African Burial Ground Project one of GSA's highest priorities.

"GSA is now poised for the first time in a decade to complete the scientific work, conduct reinterment, construct a memorial, and develop an educational center befitting the site and the city. These are accomplishments long overdue, but when completed will live on in cultural and historic importance for generations," said GSA Regional Administrator Karl H. Reichelt.

The forums are part of GSA's strategy to keep the public well informed of the progress made on the project. The forums also provide participants with an opportunity for questions and answers, as well as the chance to submit written comments.

Held at the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House at Bowling Green in lower Manhattan, the forum offered presentations by the Howard University team concerning the status of the scientific research, highlighting some of the results from the analyses that were conducted.

The African Burial Ground was discovered in lower Manhattan in 1991. More than 400 skeletal remains and thousands of artifacts were excavated for educational and scientific purposes. GSA established the office for Public Education and Interpretation for the African Burial Ground to provide information about the archaeological, cultural, historical and physical research. To date, GSA has funded more than \$22 million dollars towards the African Burial Ground project.

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